

Meeting Summary || August 6, 2020 || Online Only
Portland Harbor Cathedral Park Area Discussion with Public Agencies and Community Leaders/Members

Welcome, Agenda, and Introductions

The Facilitator started the meeting by acknowledging the time and participation of meeting attendees and led a round of introductions with all agency staff and community representatives on the call. See *Attachment A: List of Attendees*.

The Facilitator introduced Caleb Shaffer, EPA Portland Harbor Team Lead, to discuss the purpose of the meeting and provide opening remarks. Caleb thanked all community members for attending and participating and stated that the July 14, 2020 letter sent to EPA from community leaders raised a lot of good questions.

The Facilitator introduced (b) (6), Executive Director of the Portland Harbor Community Coalition (PHCC), to provide a brief overview of the background and purpose of the meeting. (b) (6) shared the July 14, 2020 letter sent to the agencies. She stated that it represents an effort from the PHCC to consolidate all the thoughts and messages from community leaders from multiple forums. The intent of the letter was to address concerns related to Cathedral Park, including the health, safety, and the cleanup of the Lower Willamette River in that area in a quick and equitable manner.

Community Leader Questions, Answers, and Dialogue Regarding Cathedral Park Area

This portion of the meeting included a presentation led by Caleb Shaffer, EPA. Caleb clarified the topics including that the meeting:

- Would include discussion about the risk of developing health problems from exposure to contaminants; and,
- Would not include discussion about the river current, debris, nor boat traffic.

Caleb explained that the cleanup of the Cathedral Park area includes a stretch of the river from River Mile 4.7 East to River Mile 6.3 East. For additional information, please see the August 6, 2020 Discussion Slide Deck [here](#)¹.

Part 1 Questions and Answers

Following the initial presentation and overview, the Facilitator opened the discussion up for questions. The following are questions asked by community leaders and responses from agencies or agency contractors noted during the session:

- **Q1:** Does this map (a reference to map on [slide 7](#)) include cleanup of the beach and park area that makes up Cathedral Park? It does not look like cleanup will occur directly under the St. Johns Bridge and on the beach at Cathedral Park.
 - **A1:** Given the data currently available, the area under the St. Johns Bridge and the beach at Cathedral Park are not slated to be part of the dredging and capping cleanup. Instead, MNR (monitoring and natural recovery) will occur in this area. Based upon sampling results to-date, the levels found on the beach do not require active remediation (e.g. dredging, capping). Additional sampling during remedial design will be used to inform the cleanup offshore of Cathedral Park.

¹ Link: <https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/10/100260072>

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- **Q2:** Are the red areas on the map (reference to map on [slide 7](#)) static?
 - **A2:** For this map, they are static. EPA collected data to create this map during the remedial investigation. The beach sediment samples are from 2002. Since then, there have been other sampling efforts, i.e., in 2004-2009, 2012 by the City of Portland, and 2018-2019 by the Pre-Remedial Design (Pre-RD) Group. The 2012 and 2018 sampling showed the overall trend that contamination is decreasing in these areas. The red areas may change based on future sample results.
- **Q3:** What about the boat ramps located at Cathedral Park? Is there contamination there? Is it safe?
 - **A3:** As part of the human health risk assessment, EPA evaluated the risk to people swimming or coming into contact with the river water at Cathedral Park. This evaluation found that there is very low risk from surface water, and instead, that the risk is more associated with contaminants that bind to sediment. Therefore, EPA is focused on remediating the contaminants that bind to sediment as opposed to the contamination found in the water. There is very low risk from contacting the sediment and high risk from eating resident fish species such as bass and carp caught near the boat ramp.
- **Q4:** To help understand these slides, what does EPA mean by the description of “very low” contamination risk?
 - **A4:** In order to analyze whether the risk is “low” or “high” to human health, in the Portland Harbor Human Health Risk Assessment, EPA developed Beach User Exposure parameters based on an above average beach user of the lower Willamette River. These parameters included looking at people of different ages (child and adult), different types of skin exposure (on beach or in-water), time spent at the site, and amount of sediment consumed (EPA assumes there is some amount of sediment that is accidentally consumed when people are on the beach). “Very low” contamination risk means that the evaluated exposure would only be expected to be potentially harmful to your health if you were at this beach many days (over 90 days) of the year for multiple decades. For additional information, see [slide 18 of the presentation](#).
- **Q5:** What data does EPA have to show the Cathedral Park beach sediment contamination concentrations and can it be shared with the public?
 - **A5:** Yes, samples have been collected both at the beach and offshore. Samples from the beach are from 2002 and samples from offshore were collected in 2004-2009, 2012, and 2018-2019. For additional information, see [slide 10](#) of the presentation (for a general overview of what samples were taken and when), and [slides 20, 21, and 22](#) (for information about the contamination concentrations found in samples).

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- **Q6:** What was found at the Cathedral Park site from the 2002 beach sediment sampling?
 - **A6:** Arsenic and carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) were found in the Cathedral Park beach sediment in 2002. However, the arsenic levels were below background levels for the Lower Willamette River, which means that the level is below the concentration of arsenic found naturally in soil in the Portland Basin (2013 study by Oregon DEQ).² *Additional information added to meeting notes here (that was not discussed at the 8/6/20 meeting): Carcinogenic PAH (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon) levels were about 25 times below the active remediation level.* Based on the sampling conducted to-date, there are no immediate health concerns with recreating on the Cathedral Park beach. In addition, the lifetime cancer risk for children or adults who play on the beach or wade on the shore of the river at Cathedral Park was determined to be very low.
- **Q7:** Are there high arsenic levels in the footbridge area of Cathedral Park?
 - **A7:** Yes, there are elevated concentrations of arsenic in the sediment upstream of the footbridge in the same area (see map on [slide 7](#)) as the active remediation area. When remedial action (active clean up) occurs in the area for PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), arsenic will also be addressed.
- **Q8:** The community would like to see an infographic to explain what is going on at Cathedral Park. Are there plans to develop one?
 - **A8:** As public agencies, we are committed to working together and will continue to work with Oregon State University's (OSU) Superfund Research Program on ways to create accurate and understandable informational materials as we go forward. EPA will take the lead in following up with OSU on the draft infographic that they provided and update the community members at the September 16, 2020 Portland Harbor Public Forum.
- **Q9:** Was there a time in which the area around the beach was remediated and contaminated soil was removed?
 - **A9:** Several agency members responded and stated that they had no recollection of any past work being done around the beach at Cathedral Park to remove contaminated soil.
- **Q10:** What is keeping Cathedral Park from being cleaned up?
 - **A10:** The Cathedral Park area is not currently under a remedial design agreement with any potentially responsible parties (PRPs). EPA and other parties are working towards a plan to get this site under a remedial design agreement.
- **Q11:** EPA has used enforcement tools as an approach to get other sites under remedial design agreements. When does EPA plan to move to enforcement for the Cathedral Park area?
 - **A11:** This is a priority area for each of the public agencies and for EPA. EPA typically uses enforcement as a last option after all other efforts have been exercised.

² Link: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/FilterDocs/cu-bkgrmetals.pdf>

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- **Q12:** Is there a concern about flooding bringing contaminated sediment up onto the grasslands where people recreate at Cathedral Park?
 - **A12:** The Willamette River in this area generally tends to be erosive. For most of the year, the banks lose sediment through erosion, so we are not concerned about contaminated sediment being brought onto the grasslands/shore where people recreate at Cathedral Park. Most of the time, sediment moves from the Cathedral Park beach and the park down into the river and not the other way around.
- **Q13:** We have heard rumors about the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) conducting channel dredging in the area. Does EPA have oversight on the USACE's activity?
 - **A13:** EPA does not have oversight on the USACE's activity, instead EPA coordinates with them and any coordinated work in the river is held to the standards of the EPA's Portland Harbor Superfund Record of Decision (ROD). USACE is currently scheduled for the October meeting of the Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group (CAG) to present on their channel dredging plans.
- **Q14:** Has EPA considered the potential for volatilization of PCBs from surface water at Cathedral Park?
 - **A14:** At other Superfund Sites where PCB levels are much greater than the Portland Harbor levels, PCB volatilization was not found to pose a health risk. In addition, in 2018, EPA conducted a review of the potential for PCB volatilization from surface water for Portland Harbor and the River Mile 11 East Project Area. The results of this review indicate that PCBs volatilizing from surface water to air are estimated to be at concentrations below levels of concern on both on a river mile and sitewide basis. As a result, EPA has not identified this exposure pathway as a human health risk at the Portland Harbor Superfund Site. However, during construction air samples may be collected and if contaminant levels exceed air quality standards, cleanup work will be modified and/or additional controls will be taken, as needed.

Part 2: Ideas to Address Concerns After Hearing Information and Responses

The Facilitator thanked all meeting attendees for participating in the discussion and asked the community members to suggest ideas for potential proposed solutions after hearing today's information and responses from the agencies.

Draft Proposed Community Leader Ideas Shared for Tangible Actions

The draft proposed ideas captured below were suggested to EPA and the other public agencies by community members as potential ways to address concerns after hearing the information and responses from agency representatives regarding the Cathedral Park area at the August 6, 2020 meeting.

Community members requested that EPA and the other agencies at the meeting consider the following.

- **Follow-up Conversation/Panel at Public Forum:** A follow-up conversation/panel addressing this same topic (the Cathedral Park area) at the September 16 Public Forum.
- **Infographic/Outreach Materials:** Consider coordinating with the public agencies, OSU, and the communities on an accurate and collaborative infographic and/or materials/handout that are easy to understand and accessible for dissemination to the public.
- **Washing Station:** Consider installing a washing station near the Cathedral Park fishing dock so that people can rinse off themselves and their dogs. Also consider installing a fish washing/cleaning station

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with posted instructions on how to clean fish properly, as well as the fish advisory indicating which fish are and are not safe to eat.

- **Site-Specific Signage:** Consider developing very clear signage for installation at the Cathedral Park area about the health risks in this area. For example, signage could say, "Cathedral Park is contaminated with the following contaminants: x, y, z. Here is a map of where they are in and around the park and here is the risk you are facing." This would help people make more informed decisions about how they and their children recreate in the area.
- **More Sampling:** Consider conducting additional comprehensive sampling on the Cathedral Park beach area to check whether concentrations have changed since the area was last sampled.
- **Sand Replacement:** Consider removing contaminated sand and replacing it with clean sand on the Cathedral Park beach.
- **Follow-up Conversation with the City regarding the City Master Plan:** The City of Portland and the communities at the meeting stated that they strive to conduct a follow-up conversation regarding the City Master Plan. A lot has changed in North Portland since the plan was developed in 2009; inclusive outreach and identifying gaps need to be considered.
- **Bioremediation Education and Salmon Habitat at Cathedral Park:** Consider working with the Port of Portland, who owns the land on the other side of Green Anchors on park extension, to develop bioremediation education, salmon habitat, or a recreation trail.

Draft Proposed Community Leaders Ideas Shared for Next Steps

Community members requested that EPA and the other agencies at the meeting complete the following next steps:

- Share sampling data with community leaders.
- Develop maps/materials to help alleviate misunderstandings or misperceptions about the Cathedral Park area.
- Make the Cathedral Park area a priority for cleanup actions.

Inclusive Procurement

The Facilitator introduced (b) (6), BlueGreen Alliance, to briefly discuss the importance of inclusive procurement. (b) (6) acknowledged the environmental justice history of the Portland Harbor Superfund Site and the work of communities to advocate to be more included in the cleanup process. (b) (6) also noted the importance of continuing to build transparency with communities, creating opportunities for community members to follow and track data throughout the lifetime of the cleanup, and to make sure development is more inclusive and relevant to our communities.

Summary & Next Steps

The Facilitator thanked all meeting attendees for participating in the discussion and recapped the follow-up action items and next steps.

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Attachment A: Meeting Attendees

The following is a list of attendees from the August 6, 2020 Cathedral Park meeting. The list is grouped by attendees from public agencies and community leaders/representatives/others.

Public Agency Representatives (alphabetical by agency)

- Jessica Terlikowski, City of Portland
- Annie Von Burg, City of Portland
- Brett Horner, City of Portland, Parks and Recreation
- Lauren McGuire, City of Portland, Parks and Recreation
- Dale Cook, City of Portland, Parks and Recreation
- Laura Knudsen, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Caleb Shaffer, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Jim McKenna, Oregon Governor's Office
- Sarah Greenfield, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Madi Novak, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Lauren Wirtis, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- David Farrer, Oregon Health Authority (OHA)
- Courtney Fultineer, Oregon Health Authority (OHA)

Community Leaders, Community Representatives, and Others (alphabetical by affiliation)

***Note:** If you don't see your name below and you attended the 8/6/2020 meeting, please let Laura Knudsen (knudsen.laura@epa.gov, 206-553-1838) know! Thank you!*

- (b) (6), Audubon Society of Portland
- (b) (6), BlueGreen Alliance
- (b) (6), North Portland Neighborhood Services (NPNS)
- (b) (6), Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR)
- (b) (6), Oregon State University (OSU)
- (b) (6), Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group (CAG)
- (b) (6), Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group (CAG)
- (b) (6), Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group (CAG)
- (b) (6), Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group (CAG)
- (b) (6), Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group (CAG)
- (b) (6), Portland Harbor Community Coalition (PHCC)
- (b) (6), Portland Harbor Community Coalition, (PHCC)
- (b) (6), Portland Harbor Community Coalition (PHCC)
- (b) (6), Portland Harbor Community Coalition (PHCC)
- (b) (6), Willamette River Advocacy Group (WRAG)
- (b) (6), Willamette River Advocacy Group (WRAG)
- (b) (6), Willamette River Advocacy Group (WRAG)
- (b) (6), Willamette River Advocacy Group (WRAG)

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- (b) (6), Willamette River Advocacy Group (WRAG)
- (b) (6), Support of Portland Harbor Community Coalition (PHCC)
- (b) (6), Northwest Toxic Communities Coalition (NWTCC)

EPA Contractors (alphabetical by affiliation)

- Kyle Vickstrom, CDM Smith (technical contractor)
- Kassandra Tzou, CDM Smith (technical contractor)
- Annie Kilburg Smith, Triangle Associates (facilitation team)
- Kizz Prusia, Triangle Associates (facilitation team)